

This document assumes that the reader has a good knowledge of symmetric relay. If this is not the case then a search on the internet for Richard Hills symmetric relay will provide a document that will give them this.

## 1 System philosophy & structure

The system uses artificial relay methods on strong hands, with a forcing-club base and “transfer” suit openings.

The 1♣ opening includes all hands with 15+ HCP.

We open a weak NT with all balanced hands (4333, 4432, 5m332, or 5422 both minors). May take liberties with shape if partner has passed.

Other opening one-bids are “transfers” with unbalanced hands: 10-14. Openings become Precision style in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> seats. We may take liberties in 3<sup>rd</sup> seat, particularly when non-vulnerable.

Hand types are divided into the following

Flat

Single suited

2 suited not 5+/5+

2 suited 5+/5+

three suited

Variations to standard symmetric relay are

Single suited hands

3D 5332

3H 6331

3S 7330

3NT 7(32)1 that would not be positive to a weak relay

4C 7(32)1 with controls+2 that would be positive to a weak relay

Two suited hands that are not 5+/5+

3C 5422

3D 5431

3H 6421

3S 6430

3NT 7411 via high shortage is a hand positive to a weak relay

4C 7420 that would not be positive to a weak relay

4D 7420 with controls+2 that would be positive to a weak relay

Controls start at 2 (not 2-3) for all 10-14 HCP opening bids

Relay points are not used. Controls are A=2,K=1 always

Denial cue bidding shows queens in the suit that is the number of controls minus one eg. with 2 controls the first suit, 3 controls the second suit, 4 controls the third suit

Two suited hands that are 5+/5+ some auctions identify which is the 6 card suit in 6511, 6520 hands

The sequence 1d-1h-1nt-2NT+ (can't have 5+4xx so therefore must be 45+xx MIN), and therefore 1d-1h-1nt-2h is 45+xx MAX

Flat hands are different and are described later

### Weak relays

If the relayer needs partner to have extra strength, he can make a Weak Relay. That asks partner to bid next step, breaking the relay, with 2 or 3 controls, or with 4 controls without extra values. With more, partner should show controls by steps: 2nd step is 4 with extra values, not 3; and third step is any 5 controls etc.

If partner is known to be balanced, then a weak relay asks for extra points. So, if partner already showed 9+, a weak relay would be looking for 14+ with 4+ controls.

If we break out before the full shape is out – for example, to bid 2NT for positional reasons – then:

- step is still minimum, followed by natural bidding.
- Others show extra, and continue relays up 2 (or 3) steps.

## CONSTRUCTIVE

First and second seat opening bids

- 1♣ 15 + HCP any shape
- 1♦ 10-14 HCP 4+♥ one, two or three suited
- 1♥ 10-14 HCP 4+♠ one, two or three suited
- 1♠ 10-14 HCP 4+♦ denies a 4 card major, can have longer ♣
- 1NT 11-14 HCP 4333,4432,5(m)332 or 22(54)
- 2♣ 10-14 HCP 6+♣ single suited

### **1♣ opening**

- 1♦ 0-8 HCP Can be more HCP without 2 controls
- 1♥ 19+ HCP
  - 1♠ 0-5 HCP
  - 1NT+ 5-8 HCP relay plus 2 steps
- 1♠ 4+♠ not flat, not forcing can be canape
- 1NT 15-18 HCP can be off shape and includes 5 card majors
- 2♣-♥ Natural 5+ 15-18 HCP

2♠ 5+♠/5+m 15-18 HCP  
 2NT 5+♥/5+♠ 15-18 HCP  
 3♣ 5+♥/5+♣ 15-18 HCP  
 3♦ 5+♥/5+♦ 15-18 HCP  
 3M Natural sets suit, invites cues, non serious 3NT  
 4m Natural sets suit, optional KCB

1♥ 9+ HCP 4+ spades one, two suited or 3 suited both majors

1♠ relay  
     1NT ♥  
         2♣ relay  
             2♦ 3 suited  
             2♥+ 2 suited  
     2♣ ♦  
     2♦ single suited  
     2♥+ ♣

1♠ 9+ HCP 4+♥ denies 4+♠, can have longer minor

1NT relay  
     2♣ ♦  
     2♦ single suited  
     2♥+ ♣

1NT 9+ HCP 4+♦ denies a 4 card major, can have longer ♣

2♣ relay  
     2♦ single suited  
     2♥+ ♣

2♣ 9+ HCP 5+♣ single or 3 suited both minors

2♦ relay  
     2♥ 3 suited both minors  
     2♠+ single suited

2♦ 9+ HCP 4♥ Flat

2♥ relay  
     2♠ 4♠  
     2NT 4♦  
     3♣ 3433  
     3♦ ♣ 2434  
     3♥ 3424 2 controls  
     3♠+ 3424 3 controls

2♥ 9+ HCP 4♠ Flat

2♠ relay  
     2NT ♦  
     3♣ 4333  
     3♦ 4234  
     3♥+ 4324 2 controls

2♠ 9+ HCP 4♦ Flat

2NT relay  
 3♣ 3343  
 3♦ 2344  
 3♥+ 3244 2 controls  
 2NT 9+ HCP 3334 2 controls  
 3♣+ 9+ HCP 3334 3 controls

### 1♦ opening first/second seat

Pass no game interest, may be very weak without ♦  
 1♥ relay Artificial Invitational or GF  
 1♠ Not 4+♠, min single suited or ♣+♥, any strength ♦+♥  
 1NT GF relay  
 2♣ ♦  
 2♦ single suited min  
 2♥+ ♣  
 2♣+ NAT NF INV  
 1NT 4+♠  
 2♣ GF relay  
 2♦ three suited  
 2♥+ 5+♥/4♠  
 2♣ three suited with minors  
 2♦ GF relay  
 2♥+ NAT NF INV  
 2♦ max single suited  
 2♥ max 5+♣/4♥  
 2♠+ max 5+♣/5+♥  
 1♠ 4+♠ NF 0-11 HCP  
 2NT max 6+♥/3♠  
 3m max canape  
 1NT 4+♣ NF 0-11 HCP  
 2♣ 5+♦ NF 0-11 HCP  
 2♦ 3-5♥ near to invitational  
 2♥ 3+♥ not forward going  
 2N shapely raise; suggests game

### 1♥ opening first/second seat

Pass no game interest, may be very weak without ♥  
 1♠ relay Artificial Invitational or GF  
 1NT min single suited or any strength ♣+♠  
 2♣ GF relay  
 2♦ single suited  
 2♥+ ♣  
 2♦+ NAT NF INV  
 2♣ ♦

	2♦	GF relay	
	2♥+	NAT NF INV	
	2♦	♥	
	2♥	GF relay	
	2♠+	NAT NF INV	
	2♥	three suited short ♥	
	2♠+	max single suited	CHANGE!
1NT	4+♣	NF 0-11 HCP	
2♣	4+♦	NF 0-11 HCP	
2♦	5+♥	NF 0-11 HCP	
2♥	3-5♠	near to invitational	
2♠	3+♠	not forward going	
2N		shapely raise; suggests game	

### 1♠ opening first/second seat

Pass	no game interest, may be very weak without ♠
1NT	relay Artificial Invitational or GF
2♣	min ♣
2♦	single suited any strength
	2♥ GF relay
	2♠+ NAT NF INV
	2♥+ max ♣
2♣	♣, BUT is pass or correct
2♦	to play
2 major	NAT 5+ NF
2NT	Bid best minor

### 1NT described under no trump structures

### 2♣ opening first/second seat

Pass	no game interest,
2♦	relay Artificial Invitational or GF
2♥	min
	2♠ GF relay responses up a step (note regained as no 3♦ shape)
	2NT+ NAT NF INV
	2♠+ normal relay responses (note no 3♦ shape)
2 major	NAT 5+ NF, freely raise with support
2NT	bid 3♣ with min, bid splinter/3NT with max
3♣	not forward going

### 1♦ opening third/fourth

2 Major 6+ suit 4 other major

### 1 Major opening third/fourth

1NT 8-10 HCP  
 2♣ drury  
     2♦ OK opening not MAX  
     2♥ 4+♥ (if opening was 1♠)  
     2M poor hand

Jump in Suit = singleton Raise

## No Trump hands

### 1NT opening

2♣ relay Artificial Invitational or GF

2♦ no 4M

2♥ GF relay

2♠ ♦

2NT (23)44

3♣ 3334

3♦ 2335

3♥+ 3235

2♥ 4♥

2♠ GF relay

2NT 4♠

3♣ 4♦

3♦ 3433

3♥ 2434

3♠+ 3424 2-3 controls

2♠ 4♠ not 4♥

2NT INV NF

3♣ GF relay

3♦ ♦

3♥ 4333

3♠ 4234

3NT 4324 do not run on with controls

2NT 22(54) min

3♣ GF relay

3♦ 2245

3♥ 2254 2-3 controls

3♣ 2245 MAX

3♦ 2254 MAX 2-3 controls

2♦♥ transfer change of suit is INV 5+/5+

2♠ range probe or to play in a minor

2NT min

3♣ max

2NT/3♣ transfer to ♣/♦ at least invite, new suit is shortage asking to pick game

3♦ 4-4 majors GF no slam interest

3♥ 4♠ not 4♥ GF no slam interest  
 3♠ 4♥ not 4♠ GF no slam interest  
 4♣ ♥  
 4♦ ♠  
 4M play

**1NT (overcall, after 1♣-1♦-1NT, 1♣-1♦-1♥-1♠-1NT)**

2♣ lavings  
     2♦ no 5M minimum  
         2M not forcing 4 or 5 card suit  
         3♣ slam interest 4 card suits up the line  
         3♦ 4-4 majors GF no slam interest  
         3♥ 4♠ not 4♥ GF no slam interest  
         3♠ 4♥ not 4♠ GF no slam interest  
 2M 5 card suit  
 2NT no 5 card suit max  
 2♦♥ transfer change of suit is forcing  
 2♠/2NT transfer to ♣/♦ suits are then shortage  
 3♣ slam interest 4 card suits up the line  
 3♦ 4-4 majors GF no slam interest  
 3♥ 4♠ not 4♥ GF no slam interest  
 3♠ 4♥ not 4♠ GF no slam interest  
 4♣ ♥  
 4♦ ♠

**2NT (overcall, after 1♣-1♦-1♥-1♠-2NT)**

3♣ 5 card major ask  
     3♦ no 5 card major but a 4 card major  
         3M 4 cards in the other major  
         4♦ 44 in majors  
 3♥ no 5 or 4 card major  
     3♠ Bid 3NT  
         4♣ 4♣ RKCB  
             4♦ <4♣ otherwise RKCB responses  
         4♦ 4♦ RKCB  
             4♥ <4♦ otherwise RKCB responses  
     3NT 5♠4♥  
     4♣ 5+♣ RKCB  
         4♦ <3♣ otherwise RKCB responses  
     4♦ 5+♦  
         4♥ <3♦ otherwise RKCB responses  
     3♠ 5♠  
     3NT 5♥  
 3♦/♥ transfer  
 3♠ Bid 3NT to play or optional KCB in a minor

3NT forcing minor stayman,  
4♣/♦ set suit and is optional KCB  
4♥/♠ 5 card suit no 4 card minor  
4NT NAT  
4♣ ♥  
4♦ ♠

## COMPETITION

### Relays in competition

Generally, if they give us extra steps, we take them, but special arrangements apply directly over our opening bid.

If they force us up, we can go up 1 or 2 steps, but 3 steps breaks relay.

Where the relayer can pass to relay, double is penalty (and next step is weak relay). Where relayer is in 4th seat, double is relay. This applies even when the previous relay didn't start a GF; in that case relayer has to break out to show an invitation.

In high level competition where pass is forcing, pass-then-pull shows more slam interest than bidding immediately.

### **Interference over 1♣ opening**

1♣ (X):

Pass = 0-4 any. Then XX = relay (no range), others = natural NF.

XX = 5-6 any. Then 1♦ = relay (no range), others = natural NF.

1♦ = 7-8 any. Then system on (no range over relay).

1♥ up = as directly over 1♣.

1♣ (1♦):

Pass = 0-4(5). Then X = relay (no range), others = natural NF.

X = 5-8. Then system on (no range).

1♥ up = as directly over 1♣.

1♣ (1♥):

Pass = 0-8. Then X = relay,

X = replaces 1♥ response.

1♠ up = system on.

1♣ (1♠):

Pass = 0-8. Then X = relay up 1 step, 1NT up = natural (2♠ = Michaels).

X = replaces 1♥ response (relays up 1).

1♠ up = system on (relays up 1).

1♣ (1N):



Pass = 0-8. Then natural (no relays).  
X = replaces 1♥ response (relays up 2).  
2♣ up = system on (relays up 2).

1♣ (2♣ through 2♠):

Cue = Michaels

Below cue (including X) = Transfers (♠ -> NT). Competitive or stronger. Not accepting transfer is F1.

If transfer to NT, change of suit is NAT F1, cue is stopper ask or strong

Transfer to NT followed by cue denies stopper

Transfer into cue = take out

---added 2024/Nov/10---

1 After 1♣ - 1♦ (interference)

Over interference by 4th hand:

If 4th hand doubles:

Pass = relay, and we use the extra steps.

1♥ = natural,

XX take out if X=♦, 15-16 flat if not

1NT 17-18 flat

others as per system.

If 4th hand bids 1♥:

pass = relay,

X = take out limited

others = system on.

If 4th hand bids 1♠ or 1NT (not strong and flat):

pass = relay,

X = T/O,

others = system off.

---added 2024/Nov/10---

### **Interference over 1♦ opening (use similar methods over 1♥ opening)**

1♦ (X): XX = relay. Pass = weak, nothing to say. 1♥ = nat, NF, ♥ tolerance.

1♦ (1♥): Pass = weak, nothing to say. X = relay. Others = system on.

1♦ (1♠): 2♠ = ♥ raise, inv+;

X = T/O. 1N/2x = nat, NF; 2N = inv+, support.

3x = nat, F1.

3♥ = weak

3N = to play.

3♠ / 4m = splinters

4♥ = PRE.

1♦(1N): X = PEN. But, pass (pass) X = two suited, often 5-5; then 2x = P/C.  
Ditto 1♦(X) pass(1NT).  
Others = natural, NF.

If they interfere after 1N opening or overcall

After 1NT (X):

Bids = system on.

XX puppet to 2♣. Usually 5+ of a minor.

Pass = forces opener to XX. Then:

pass to play

bids = running into a long (or short) suit.

After 1NT (P) P (X): opener doesn't have to XX, partner's XX is to play.

If RHO doubles our 2♣ response: normal relay rules.

If RHO doubles our transfer,

XX = offer to play,

pass = 2 card support. Then XX to continue as normal, or bid scramble.

accept transfer = 3+ support.

1N (they overcall 2♣): system on, with X = relay.

1N (they overcall 2♦ or higher):

X = T/O if their bid is nat, first transfer if there's no anchor suit.

pass & later X = T/O

bids = NF (or transfers if no anchor) at 2 level, GF at 3 level.

2NT = Lebensohl. Same as methods over e.g. (2♥) double.

After e.g. 1NT (2♦=majors):

X = values. Next double takeout.

2♥ / 2♠ = both minors, emphasising ♣ / ♦ respectively.

2NT = natural, invite.

3m = nat NF.

## Other Conventions

### ROMAN KEY CARD BLACKWOOD

After the responder shows key cards,

The cheapest step bid asks for the queen of trumps,. Responder denies the queen of trumps by bidding step bid. Lowest of NT and trump suit is the queen and no outside king. Other suit is queen and that king or the other 2 kings.

The second cheapest step bid asks for kings, suit is that king or the other 2 kings.

Cueing a suit after this is asking for 3rd round control. Signing off in 6 is no 3rd round control. Bidding 7 of the trump suit shows Q in suit. Other bids show shortage in suit.

5NT is used to cue a suit not cueable below 6 of the trump suit

If a void it can be shown by running on past the 2 with a Q bid.

Eg 4NT            5NT=0-3 Key cards

6♣ = 1-4 etc

## INTERFERENCE

### OPTIONAL ROMAN KEY CARD BLACKWOOD in MINOR

4 Minor is assumed to be optional RKCB unless it is obviously invitational or weak or competitive.

4 Minor is never normal RKCB

Step bid takes control of hand with RKCB step responses or denies primary support if there is doubt about support.

4 minor will be optional key card where it is a raise, a preference, or it sets the suit

### CARDING:

Overlead all, 3<sup>rd</sup> from internal sequences, 3rds and low.

Signals and Discards: reverse Count, Mckenney when count established, tend to throw first what you don't want, no attitude except in rare cash out situations.

### BIDDING OVER OPPONENTS 2 LEVEL BIDS THAT DON'T HAVE AN ANCHOR SUIT

All bids are transfers including double showing the suit above and 2S showing a flat hand. Jumps are preemptive.

Accepting the transfer shows you would have passed a natural overcall.

Change of suit is then forcing for 1 round

If you have shown a flat hand 3C is stayman and 3 major a 5 card suit GF

Other bids are what you would have bid to a natural overcall including muppet and transfers over a shown flat hand.

## They open at the one level:

When they open and we overcall a minor, cue is 11+ with 3+ support or a stopper ask for NT, 3m is 6-10 with 3+ card support, 2NT (jump or not) is INV with a stopper

When they open and we overcall a major, if there are two levels to cue below 3 of our suit, then 2 level cue is 11+ with 3(4) support, 3 level cue is 6-10 with 4 card support, 3M shows 0-6 with 4 card support, and 2NT is 11+ with 4+ support.

If there is only one cue available below 3 of our suit, then cue = 11+ with 3(4) support and 2NT = 11+ with 4 card support, 3M is 6-10 with 4 card support.

(1C) 1H (P) 2C = 11+ with 3(4) support and 3C = 6-10 with 4 card support, 2NT is 11+ with 4+ support.

(1S) 2H (P) 2S = 11+ with 3(4) support and 2NT = 11+ with 4 card support

(1C) 1S (2C) 3C = 11+ with 3 support and 2NT = 11+ with 4 card support

If we can't cue below 3 of our suit then 2NT is invitational with 3+ card support.

(1S) 2H (2S) 2NT = invitational with 3+ hearts and 3S is game force heart raise with 3+ support.

Change of suit is forcing if it is 1 over 1, 2 over 2, or 3 over 2 and jumps are SPL INV+ if below 3 of suit. If it is 2 over 1 it is not forcing and jump is forcing showing a very strong hand (17+),

## Bidding over strong 1♣ opening

Pass and reenter later with hands that are strong

1 level or X is leadworthy suit

1NT=colour, 2♣=rank, 2♦=shape 4+4+ very undisciplined,

2M weak 5+ card suit

## Bidding over strong 2♣ opening

2 level 5+ showing 0+ HCP

2NT 5+/5+ any 2 suits 0+HCP

If the opponents have shown one suit a cue asks for a stopper. If they have shown 2 suits a cue show a stopper in that suit and asks for a stopper in the other suit.